

EXHIBIT 7



**Transcript of Proceedings had in
Kathleen Koch v. Vantage Specialty Chemicals,
Inc.; et al.**

Taken On: July 17, 2024

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Kathleen Koch v. Vantage Specialty Chemicals, Inc.; et al.
Proceedings had on 7/17/2024

Page 1

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS
COUNTY DEPARTMENT, LAW DIVISION

KATHLEEN KOCH,)	
)	
Plaintiff,)	
v.)	No. 2023 L 686
)	
VANTAGE SPECIALTY)	All Consolidated
CHEMICALS, INC.; et al.,)	Cases
)	
Defendants.)	

Report of proceedings had at the hearing in
the above-entitled cause before the HONORABLE JOHN H.
EHRLICH, Judge of said Court, at Richard J. Daley
Center, 50 West Washington Street, Room 2306, Chicago,
Illinois, commencing at 9:00 a.m. on July 17th, 2024.

Kathleen Koch v. Vantage Specialty Chemicals, Inc.; et al.
Proceedings had on 7/17/2024

Page 2

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Kathleen Koch v. Vantage Specialty Chemicals, Inc.; et al.
Proceedings had on 7/17/2024

Page 3

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* * * * *

Kathleen Koch v. Vantage Specialty Chemicals, Inc.; et al.
 Proceedings had on 7/17/2024

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 16</p> <p>1 the blocking issues may be the one dealing with some of 2 the briefs I received in the past week, sort of the 3 issue of the new cases against PPG and BASF. And we 4 talked about this last time, and I had sort of wavered 5 in what I thought was the best resolution. I've done 6 some legal research in the meantime. I certainly don't 7 claim to be an expert in federal removal law by any 8 means, but I guess the initial question I have is 9 whether this is, in fact, a legal question or whether 10 it's really just a factual issue.</p> <p>11 It's my understanding that plaintiff plans on 12 naming individual persons, either current or former 13 employees of BASF and PPG, as defendants in the case.</p> <p>14 MR. HENSLEY: Correct.</p> <p>15 THE COURT: Have any of those people been named 16 yet?</p> <p>17 MR. HENSLEY: They were amended in a small handful 18 of cases. The Court entered an order. I'd have to go 19 back and look at the order for the date on that. But in 20 a small number of cases, you granted leave for us to 21 amend to add in -- it's Penman and one other individual 22 witness. So they have been added in those cases. We 23 have a motion to amend that we filed yesterday -- 24 courtesy copies here -- that we intend -- it goes</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 18</p> <p>1 these old cases that have been pending for five or more 2 years -- or for four or more years. So, you know --</p> <p>3 THE COURT: But the issue is, is if they name these 4 individuals that are Illinois residents, that destroys 5 diversity, so...</p> <p>6 MR. ROSELIUS: I don't think that's true, 7 Your Honor, because there's still a question of improper 8 joinder. I know Mr. Hensley litigated this in 9 Sterigenics. We think that's a different issue, and we 10 would take it up with the federal court if those 11 individual defendants are added.</p> <p>12 THE COURT: Well, then in that case -- My other 13 alternative is, why are the defendants waiting at 14 this -- why are they waiting? Why don't you go ahead 15 and file your removal petition at this point, see what 16 you don't -- you don't -- You can have more than one 17 removal petition. So if the first one fails, the 18 federal judge hopefully will tell you why he or she is 19 denying the petition. Because if there aren't enough 20 statements in the record -- I think there are -- there 21 have been, but this Court certainly considers Vantage 22 and Medline to be nominal defendants only and in name 23 only. They're solely here for purposes of the 24 settlements.</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 17</p> <p>1 through kind of our plan in terms of amending to add 2 them in a large number of cases, and that's covered in 3 our brief here.</p> <p>4 THE COURT: Is there a timeline for getting those 5 people into the case --</p> <p>6 MR. HENSLEY: Our --</p> <p>7 THE COURT: -- in the amended complaint?</p> <p>8 MR. HENSLEY: Our plan would be that if the order 9 is entered today granting us leave to amend, that we 10 would be able to get our complaints on file within 11 14 days.</p> <p>12 THE COURT: When is the one-year deadline for the 13 removal statute? When does it run with regard to BASF 14 and PPG?</p> <p>15 MR. ROSELIUS: Your Honor, that's a very 16 complicated question.</p> <p>17 THE COURT: And I don't -- And I don't know -- I'm 18 asking, in part, because I don't know what type of 19 jurisdiction we are, whether it's based upon the service 20 on the last defendant or service on the first defendant.</p> <p>21 MR. ROSELIUS: It's a very complicated question, 22 Your Honor, in part, because the plaintiffs have filed 23 cases on many different dates and now have sought, as 24 you know, to bring in BASF and PPG into the shell of</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 19</p> <p>1 I haven't made a finding if there's any 2 untoward conduct by the parties in trying to delay the 3 settlements. I don't think anybody wants that. But if 4 there is, we have not had -- haven't had that 5 evidentiary hearing, which there hasn't been. So I 6 don't see any untoward conduct.</p> <p>7 And moreover, I guess I have a question with 8 regard to Cosmed and Isomedix. They're out-of-state 9 corporations, and they have been in this case -- or in 10 these cases all along. So if it's -- What difference 11 does it -- What I was looking for and what I didn't 12 find -- Let's put it this way. What I was looking for 13 and what I didn't find was any -- and I don't want to 14 use the word "duty," but any preference, I guess, that I 15 am supposed to make as a state court judge in teeing up 16 a case so that it could be removed to federal court. 17 It's not my responsibility to do that. Whether it's -- 18 Whether that happens or not is simply the nature of the 19 case, but it's not my responsibility to make sure that a 20 party gets a federal forum versus a state forum. I 21 mean, that's not the purpose of --</p> <p>22 MR. CHIMERA: If I may be heard --</p> <p>23 THE COURT: -- of complete diversity of 24 jurisdiction.</p>

1 STATE OF ILLINOIS)
) SS.
2 COUNTY OF COOK)

4 Enza Tenerelli, being first duly sworn, on
5 oath says that she is a Certified Shorthand Reporter and
6 Registered Professional Reporter, doing business in the
7 City of Chicago, County of Cook, and the State of
8 Illinois;

11 And that the foregoing is a true and correct
12 transcript of her shorthand notes so taken as aforesaid
13 and contains all the proceedings had at the said
14 hearing.

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24

